

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. I.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER, 1892.

No. 6

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

DEO. H. ELLIS, PRINTER, 141 FRANKLIN ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 6.

THE LORD IS MY PORTION	57
THANKSGIVING	58
THE BIBLE CLASS	62
CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY	65
HOW THE NEW WORLD WAS DISCOVERED	66
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL	67
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB	67

THE LORD IS MY PORTION.

My heart is resting, O my God,—

I will give thanks and sing;

My heart is at the secret source

Of every precious thing.

Now the frail vessel thou hast made

No hand but thine shall fill;

For the waters of the earth have failed,

And I am thirsty still.

I thirst for springs of heavenly life,

And here all day they rise;

I seek the treasure of thy love,

And close at hand it lies.

And a new song is in my mouth

To long-loved music set,—

Glory to thee for all the grace

I have not tasted yet.

Glory to thee for strength withheld,

For want and weakness known,

And the fear that sends me to thy breast

For what is most my own.

I have a heritage of joy

That yet I must not see;

But the hand that bled to make it mine

Is keeping it for me.

There is a certainty of love

That sets my heart at rest,—

A calm assurance for to-day

That to be poor is best,—

A prayer reposing on his truth

Who hath made all things mine,

That draws my captive will to thee,

And makes it one with thine

I will give thanks for suffering now,

For want and toil and loss,

For the death that sin makes hard and slow

Upon my Saviour's cross.

Thanks for the little spring of love

That gives me strength to say,

If they will leave me part in him,

Let all things pass away.

Sometimes I long for promised bliss,

But it will not come too late,

And the songs of patient spirits rise

From the place wherein I wait;

While in the faith that makes no haste

My soul has time to see

A kneeling host of thy redeemed

In fellowship with me.

There is a multitude around

Responsive to my prayer;

I hear the voice of my desire

Resounding everywhere.

But the earnest of eternal joy

In every prayer I trace;

I see the glory of the Lord

On every chastened face.

How oft, in still communion known,

Those spirits have been sent

To share the travail of my soul

Or show me what it meant!

And I long to do some work of love

No spoiling hand could touch,

For the poor and suffering of thy flock

Who comfort me so much.

But the yearning thought is mingled now

With the thankful song I sing;

For thy people know the secret source

Of every precious thing.

The heart that ministers for thee

In thy own work will rest;

And the subject spirit of a child

Can serve thy children best.

Mine be the reverent, listening love

That waits all day on thee;

With the service of a watchful heart

Which no one else can see,—

The faith that in a hidden way
No other eye may know,
Finds all its daily work prepared,
And loves to have it so.

My heart is resting, O my God,
My heart is in thy care;
I hear the voice of joy and health
Resounding everywhere.
"Thou art my portion, saith my soul,"
Ten thousand voices say;
And the music of their glad Amen
Will never die away.

—Anna L. Waring.

Why has God made us to enjoy beauty and music, or why simply has he made the flowers, but out of love like that of a mother?

Why, but to make us happy, to gladden our hearts with his beautiful works, to put some proof of his love into every path our feet may tread? Even among our human friends, we feel that there is a peculiar tenderness in a gift of flowers which the donor has culled especially for us. Many a large dotation of lands or gold from a father has called forth less grateful feelings than the little bunch of our favorite roses which a mother's gentle hands have arranged to greet us in our chamber. And shall we have no swelling heart, no tearful eye, for Him who gave us *all* the flowers?

This is an endless theme, wide as man's nature and his world. If I should begin to speak of the joys of the affections and of the intellect, instead of a section of a chapter, I should write volumes on the duty of thanksgiving.

But let us see what is *not* included in the mere necessity of life,—what proofs of God's actual love and tenderness to us may be deducted from the conditions of our existence, and that existence still left untouched. Let us suppose that the senses ceased to convey *pleasure* to our brains, that the food which hunger made us eat had no taste, the sounds which guided us had no sweetness, the odors no perfume, the sights no color. Let us suppose a world in which there was still light enough to plough and reap, but over whose sky stretched one unbroken cloud, through which no sun ever shone to brighten with its noonday glory or hallow with its evening lustre, and through whose nights no moon or star ever opened up the

infinite to the gazer's heart. The earth is all colorless, the waters gray like lead, grass and corn and trees are all one hue, and there is no flower save the black scentless blossoms of the tasteless roots. The birds have no song, the insects no merry hum; there is no such thing as music, nor the sweet soft voice of human love and human wisdom; man has no converse with his kind, for he has no joys of intellect or affection to convey. He loves no one: his words are merely a call or a command. There is no literature, no art, no virtue, no religion. But there is life left? Oh, yes! abundance of life. The creature lives out securely his threescore years and ten; for he is goaded every moment by a want which he is always able to supply, and to end his existence would be worse pain than to prolong it. So man lives on in that great silent, sunless, loveless, Godless world.

Now suppose, reader, that you were brought from some planet where existence was such living death as this, and that God took you and placed you on our radiant earth, some summer morning, while the sun was rising over the sea, and the woods were glittering in the dewy light, while the birds were pouring forth their songs, and the fragrance of the grass and flowers filled the air with sweetness, suppose that you entered a human abode, and saw in one chamber a mother caressing her child on her breast, and in another a youth poring over pages fraught with noblest thoughts, and, yet again, in another a strong man on his knees wrestling with all his soul for the strength to do some great right, and grasping in his faith that Hand which can do all things till at length the victory was won, and the loving heart broke forth in praise and adoration; suppose you could see these things with the eye of one who saw them for the first time,—would it seem to you that a *few* words of thanks dismissed justly the claims of God's tenderness on his thrice-happy children?

But, as I have said, there is a greater cause for our gratitude to God than the pleasures of this palace-world he has built for our present abode. Beyond it lies boundless, everlasting life. We are not made for this happiness alone, great as it is. It is but an accident of the road, a *mere* world of joys thrown into the great design!

What we are made for, what we shall all reach at last, is a height of being, a virtue including such love, such joy, that, could we see it now, our dazzled sight would never more perceive either the pleasures or the trials which belong to mortal life. God throws our immortality into the background of our consciousness, probably because, were we clearly to behold it, there could be no salutary punishment, no strengthening trial, in our earthly lot. We should feel such things no more than we heed the little pebbles which lie under our feet when we spring forward into the arms of a long-parted friend. But, though our immortality cannot now be realized by our feeble brains, it is still *there*,—it is waiting for us. In the eye of Him to whom the future is as the present, we are even now the blessed creatures we shall be hereafter,—pure and good and strong, beyond our highest aspirations. Love of God and of the myriads of our brothers will swell with rapture the vast expanse of our hearts, while our minds will grow in knowledge, God-like and illimitable, as we roam from world to world throughout the clusters of the suns, doing indeed at last “the will of our Father, even as it is done in heaven,” and growing ever more “perfect even as he is perfect.”

Rightly comprehending the meaning of our existence as an everlasting progress, in which happiness is only the secondary, and virtue the primary end, we shall also be better able to estimate the value of those blessings which tend more directly to assist our moral life. Of course, *all* that God does for us helps this great design for which he made us at first, clothed us with garbs of flesh, and built for us this planet home. We may take everything that preserves our animal life, everything that assists our intellect and our affections, as God’s instrument to bring us onward and upward. The *necessaries* of existence do this by affording a ground for the moral life. The *luxuries* which add happiness to that physical existence do it by warming and encouraging the better sentiments of our nature, proving to us God’s tender care, and offering us opportunities of self-sacrifice for others. Further yet, besides the necessities of life and the joys thereunto added, God helps us by *sufferings*. These are often the very best helps,

and consequently the best blessings of all, healing our sinful hearts and making us advance with tenfold rapidity on the path toward our glorious end. Hereafter I doubt not, when we look back to earth from the high spheres of our future being, we shall all thank God most fervently for these very sufferings. The memory of the dear homes of our childhood, of the scenes of requited affection, or of honest joy in the success of noble labors,—even these will fade before the still more grateful recollection of the sick-beds where our strength and health were struck down, and of the graves where our dearest human affections lay buried.

And yet further does God help us, and more powerfully, more directly, than by suffering itself. Over the chaos of our conflicting will and desires his Spirit broods, “moving on the face of the deep,” and stilling into sunniest calm the night storm of those howling waves. For the inspiration which has enlightened the conscience, for the grace which has melted and purified the heart, who shall thank God enough? Who shall count the value of each holy thought each tear of penitence, each throb of aspiration, which he has caused to start in the darkened mind, the hardened conscience?

Let us hope that these *spiritual* blessings at least are rarely received thanklessly. Perhaps their most unfailing result is to flood the soul with a sense of gratitude unutterable, while we think that to sinners like us the holy Lord of heaven stoops to give his aid.

If we were really thankful, we should show it in some such ways as these:—

We should be absolutely *content* at heart, not merely *resigned*, but *cheerful*. There seems great error current still in the world on this point. True religion is and ought to be something more than “Islam.” Resignation, patience, submission, belong, not to the happy *rule* of human life, but to the exceptional hours of grief and agony, when our poor hearts can ascend to nothing beyond. For the vast majority of our days, when God is actually loading us with joys of the senses, the intellect, and the affections, talk of “resignation” seems almost a mockery. What if we can *imagine* some other pleasures besides those he has seen best for us; if we yearn for larger spheres

of mental action or more tender bonds of human love; if we chafe against the fetters which weakness or poverty or the conduct of others place on our freedom; if we smart under frequent bodily pain, or the worse pangs inflicted by unkindness,—what are all these, and the thousand trials like them, compared to the great overweight of blessings in the opposite scale? Cannot we trust God, who has given us ninety-and-nine pleasures, that, if he withhold the hundredth, it is from no forgetfulness, no niggardliness? Cannot we feel assured that he ever makes us

"As blest as we can bear,"

as happy as will consist with our highest welfare now and forever? We all believe this in theory, and yet our spirits are forever falling back into the same repining state which we attempt to cloak under the name of resignation. The martyr of an agonizing disease, who knows he must endure tortures ending only with his life, the bereaved heart which aches in utter solitude,—these may be "resigned." It is a noble and holy sight to see how in such trials even the weakest often rise to most beautiful virtue, and "in patience possess their souls." Sometimes, even under such torments, men have ascended still higher, and have spoken of joys of Divine Love pouring into their wounds a peace ineffable.

We should show our gratitude by actually expressing our thanks in the words which would spontaneously issue from our lips, were our hearts truly kindled. Our acts of worship would often include recitals of the benefits we receive, and at every moment of enjoyment where formal worship was impossible we should send up to God the *thought* of gratitude.

I believe that few things would more completely modify our lives than such habitual thanksgiving. Suppose that, instead of confining our grace to one meal in the day, we were each to say in our hearts a little grace after each successive occupation? The business of the field or the office honestly and punctually performed to the best of our abilities, a kind act which we have been permitted to accomplish, whether with or without self-denial, a study which we have pursued to the enlargement of our minds, a

conversation which has aided our own or another's good thoughts or warmed our kindly sympathies with friendly intercourse, a walk or ride in the fresh air, invigorating brain and limbs,—are not all these worth a "grace" as well as the best of good dinners? * And, if we were thus to accustom ourselves to thank God for the innocent pleasures of life, how sharp a line would it force us to draw between them and the guilty ones for which we could not dare to bless him! After spending hours of idleness when labor was due, after self-indulgence, when we might have benefited our brother, after reading bad books, quarrelling, slanderous or unclean talk, meals at which we sunk our souls in gluttony and excess,—could we offer thanks after these things to Him whose gifts we had polluted? Surely, not the most impious among us all! Thanksgiving then would divide, as with chemical test, the evil pleasures from the good. And it would hallow and endear these good ones beyond our conception. To a loving heart even the merest trifle becomes precious when accepted as a token of care for our welfare; and so every blessing of mortal life may be taken as proving the tender mercy of Him whom we may reverence and love beyond the noblest and nearest of earthly friends. There are days (perhaps most commonly when the heart is softened by penitence), blessed days, when we trace everything to God's hand, and are ready to weep in very tenderness for the primrose which has blossomed in our favorite nook, or the caresses of the poor dog which its Maker and ours has taught to sympathize so wondrously with our joy and sorrow. Oh that we could keep forever fresh such feelings as these! It is not they which are false and exaggerated. It is our ordinary coldness which is a mockery of the great

*The rabbins appoint benedictions for every event of life. The following are from Leo of Modena: In the morning, on awakening, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who restorest life to the dead and who lightenest the blind!" On applying themselves to study the law, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who hast given us the law!" On taking food, "Blessed be Thou who bringest bread out of the earth!" "Blessed be Thou, Creator of the fruit of the vine!" On smelling flowers, etc., "Blessed be Thou who hast created odor!" On seeing a high mountain or the sea, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, Creator of all things at the beginning," etc.

reality of God's goodness and man's obligations.

Nor is it only for ourselves and our own blessings that we ought to give thanks to God. I have already said that we should bless him for the beautiful and beneficent order of his creation, and it is not merely inasmuch as this benefits us that we ought to do it. Surely, a good given to our brother is a source of gratitude. Surely, the happiness of the myriad millions of our fellow-creatures, rational and irrational, in the past and in the future, is a subject fit for thanksgiving. We have spoken often of the abstract wrong there would be, were crime to remain forever unpunished. Does it not seem there would also be a wrong if this whole lovely planet should roll on for age after age around the life-giving sun, followed by the sweet, holy moon, enjoying all the beneficent alternations of summer and winter and day and night, freshening its great oceans with the tides and covering its shores with the gorgeous robe of vegetable life, giving birth and sustenance to all the joyous tribes of insect and fish and bird and brute,—and yet from that happy sphere no incense of thanks should ever ascend into the heavens to bless the Lord of all for the order of his beautiful universe?

A million centuries ago, when God looked down on this third planet of this solar system in this galaxy of suns, there was, as we think, no living soul who trod its surface endowed with the power to apprehend its bounteous intent or to return him an expression of gratitude. The mighty Ichthyosaurus wallowing in those turbid waves, the fearful Pterodactyle spreading his batwings in the heated air, the giant Megatherium trampling through the forests of primeval pines,—what knew they of the Maker who built their monster forms and planted their luxuriant woods and sent the light of his sun to their large horny eyes, and made his rain to grave its traces on that red sandstone of the olden world, even as to-day he sends it on the cultured fields of the rational sons of men? And now, when many a hundred thousand years have passed since the far-off epochs of the Saurian and the giant Sloth, when God looks down now on our garden-globe, how many does he see upon all its smiling surface offering up the dumb world's thanks to him, its kind and

careful Lord? It is but a few, even now, who can thus be the spokesmen of the silent earth. The brutes and birds and fish of our time are as insensible of religion as the monster creatures of old. The ass and the ox of to-day know the crib and the fold, as the mammoth and the hyena knew the ancient caverns where their petrified bones have lain all these millenniums; but no steps of advance can we yet trace in their knowledge of Him to whose infinite heart their hungry cries have never appealed in vain, "who openeth his hand and fulfilleth the desire of every living thing." Man's sacred race alone may yet produce aspirants for the solemn priesthood of our world; and, of that great family, how few are the happy sons who can stand forth in that high office? Take away the child in years and the child in knowledge; take away the savage, whose creed has not yet reached even the polytheist's power to thank, under many names, the One Giver of all good; take away all these, and how few remain who can look up to God with that tear-brimming eye which must ever turn to him after any wide survey of his bounteous world?

Surely, then, it becomes well every soul among us, which is capable of it, to take on itself this blessed work,—to leave not wholly and forever unthanked God's goodness to those who *cannot* thank him, but to put aside for a while the thought of our own present and everlasting joy, and turn to bless our Benefactor for being *also* the kind and tender Parent of all our countless fellow-creatures. Let us thank God for ourselves; but let us also thank him for others. Let us thank him for his good providence toward all the tribes of men now living or departed,—for his care of them on earth, for his love for them when gathered in by death still closer to his infinite bosom. Let us thank God that there are millions who share all our joys, and that there are millions who have joys which we shall never share. Let the blind and deaf and crippled thank God for the seeing and the hearing and the healthy limbs of their brothers. Let the hungry praise God that others have food; the bereaved, that others have the joys of affection; the orphan, that others have parents; the childless, that others have children.—*F. P. Cobbe in "Religious Duty."*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

1. Which one of the four Gospels gives an account of some of the doings of Jesus before his public ministry? (We speak now of the grown-up life of Jesus: in answering this question, set aside accounts of his birth and of his visit at twelve years old to Jerusalem; also of his baptism, which is touched upon by all four.)

2. Which two of the evangelists were also apostles? and which of these became a follower of Jesus before the other? Which was a priest? Which a tax-gatherer? Which a physician?

3. Which of the Gospels is supposed to have been written last?

4. Where is Mark supposed to have obtained material for his Gospel?

5. Which three are called the "Synoptical Gospels"? and why?

6. Which of the Synoptical Gospels has several chapters containing an independent narrative, not repeated in either of the others? and where does this portion begin and end?

7. What two important passages are contained in this independent part of the history of Jesus?

8. Which of the evangelists emphasizes the character of Jesus as a reformer of Jewish law? Which sees him most as the expected Messiah? Which most presents him as teaching the central religious truths of Christianity,—the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, the new idea of God, including in his love saint and sinner, Jew and Gentile? (Give some references to prove this.)

9. What is the especial value and charm of the Gospel of Mark?

10. In which Gospel do we find Jesus most often at Jerusalem? Are the first mentioned of these visits likely to be earlier or later than the date of the Sermon on the Mount? (in Matthew.) Why?

11. What was the order of arrangement of the four Gospels in the early manuscripts? Does the present arrangement give you the impression that the first chapters of Matthew contain a narrative chronologically preceding the first chapters of the other Gospels?

12. If, in reading the Gospels, we begin with the first chapter of Matthew and end with the last of John, shall we be likely to receive a clear and true idea of the life of Jesus? What methods of study will help us to a better understanding?

[This class may be joined at any time. Answers to the questions may be sent to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass. Several letters have been received from persons desiring to join the class who have not yet sent answers to questions: we are hoping to hear from them. Questions asked by students will be answered in the paper.]

We give below a quotation from an extremely interesting article by Dr. Edward Everett Hale.

Those who would like to read the whole article will find it in the *Christian Examiner* for September, 1858.

It must be confessed that to most readers the Gospels are simply collections of detached anecdotes about Jesus. Even among those who read with most largeness of love and faith, hardly one pauses to see how and where one event leads to another, or to consider the distinctions between the beginning, middle, and end of the Master's career. There is a general impression, doubtless, that the Sermon on the Mount made the beginning of Christ's public ministry—as, in fact, it did not—as distinct as that the crucifixion made the end. Beyond this there seems to be little idea, in most readers, of its chronology. We might ask a well-read Christian whether the cure of the Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter came before or after the execution of John the Baptist, and we might or might not obtain a correct reply. But the popular indifference to the vital order of the narrative is such that the question would not seem to most persons what it is,—as absurd as if one asked whether Gen. Washington resigned his commission to Congress before or after the battle of Lexington.

To make the life of Christ real, as to make any other life real, we need to remember it in its natural order. Any other recollection of it reduces it to an unconnected mass of anecdotes. They throw no light upon each other. Nor does one Gospel

sustain another, nor make its narrative more clear. If one of the detached fragments in such a heap is unintelligible or hard to be understood, or apparently untenable, faith is wounded and all of the other fragments are suspected. There seems nothing organic in the whole. The collection becomes only a pile of bones, and has none of the life of members fitted to each other, with one vital current running through them all. The reader needs to feel the existence of such a vital current. Let him gain the habit of finding, where it exists, the thread which unites the story of one parable, conversation, sermon, prayer, or miracle with another. He will not then be frightened when he hears an assault made on the precision of one detail or another in this connected narrative. One jewel may be loose in its setting, or two may be; but the man who has thus read cannot be persuaded that they are all loose and may be all stolen away.

It would not be fair to speak of this popular fragmentary notion regarding the gospel narrative without tracing it directly to the train of thought which has fettered Protestant theology. The usual habit of reading and of preaching has been to make of the whole a set stage-play, in which Jews, apostles, and even Jesus had fixed parts assigned to them from which they could not vary. There is so much said of a particular "plan of salvation" that the inference is immediate that God could not have saved the world in any other way. The whole life of Jesus is thus degraded into a piece of set machinery. The reader is not left at liberty to ask why he did this or why he spoke that. It was set down in the plan that he should do it and should say it. All the worst restrictions of the most arbitrary and mechanical view of fore-ordination are thus imposed on the fresh, elastic, self-directed life of him whom we call the very Lord of Life.

Now there is no reason why these restrictions should be made to bind the narrative of Christ's life more than the narrative of any other history. Whether we understand fore-knowledge or not, it never, in any other instance, hems us in as we read biography. We say that Luther went to Worms, because he was a brave man and determined to go,—not because he was fore-ordained to go. We say the Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, because they were convinced

by the arguments of John Adams,—not because it was so ordered from the beginning of the world. It is our duty to read the history of Jesus in the same way. We have no right to say that he left Jerusalem in obedience to one inscrutable decree of God, or that he returned to it in obedience to another, if in the narrative we can find reasonable motive for departure or return. Still less right have we to say that he left Judea "because the Jews sought to kill him," and in another moment to extol with holy raptures the bravery with which he went up thither to die, unless we can assign probable and intelligible reason for a change of policy. We have no right to try to satisfy our Sunday-school classes or ourselves by explaining on one Sunday why he charged his apostles not to make him known and on another why he insisted that the children might shout "Hosanna!" unless we admit and define the changes of circumstance and of policy which give sense and force to one of these directions and to the other. There is not indeed one act, one journey, one injunction, of Jesus' life which we have a right to look at coldly, as if it were but a single step to a single pre-ordered and inevitable goal. Each had its especial object in a wisdom which never compelled the free wills of those around him. He acted for the best, in each case, as it arose. If they acted for the worst, it was for him to educe good from their evil. But this was never till after the evil had been committed.

The quiet coolness, then, with which even critics pass by the changes in the course of the Saviour's life, without any attempt to suggest cause and effect, motive or plan, or indeed any of the evidences of organic life running through the whole, is to be ascribed, not to indifference, but to respect which really amounts to superstition. Jesus chose to leave Jerusalem. Jesus chose to return. Jesus chose to make to a Gentile the first announcement that he was Messiah. Jesus chose to prohibit Peter from making the same announcement. Because he chose to do thus, the implication is drawn that we have no business to ask why.

But this is a paltry way of studying him. He brings us the new life. He gives it, as he illustrates it in his own. If in our false reverence we make his life seem like ma-

chinery, in the same false reverence we make our own mechanical, if it is like his at all.

The great proportion, however, of those writers who have tried to set the fragments in the Gospels in the order of time, have not been trained in any liberty of belief or criticism. They have therefore sedulously abstained from looking at the vital order which marks the life of lives, and have made up their schemes simply from the external dates given,—as the notices of Sabbaths, feast-days, and the like upon the record. There are some little monatessarons,—made for Sunday-schools and other unpretending objects,—which become very valuable hand-books in the study of the vital order of Christ's life. But from the time of Jerome down, the great body of the critical harmonists have attached themselves so resolutely to the letter, and have ignored so blindly the spirit of the narrative, that they have not deserved more success or favor at the hands of the Church than they have received. Very diligently they have cut up the Gospels into little bits, and on strings of different length have strung those bits together in various order. And yet none of their works have in the least taken the place of the canon order of the Gospels in the popular mind. A fair illustration of this failure is that which we have cited already,—the popular impression that the Sermon on the Mount marks the beginning of Jesus' ministry, as certainly as the resurrection marks its end. This impression comes from the fact that the Sermon on the Mount is near the beginning of the Gospel which is placed first in the canon. So strongly does that fact fix itself in memory that all the harmonists, working through all the preachers of the world, have not given that sermon any other place, in the popular estimate of the current of our Lord's ministry.

They do not deserve more success because they work with ingenuity and acumen rather than with heart and genius, or even real intelligence. They have generally received what they have deserved, the favor of the acute and ingenious scholars of the world; while they have not gained the instinctive response of the warm heart of the church, simply because they did not deserve it. Their work has been in most cases the

work of children putting together a dissected map,—as they found the buttons on one piece matching the buttonholes of another,—willing to have Siberia kiss Sahara, in a heart-to-heart embrace, if only the incidental external signs direct it.

The Church does not care for criticism. What it wants is life. The four Gospels do not give the materials for a diary of the life of Jesus. But they do give us what is of much more importance, the information from which we can digest its causes and effects, precedents and consequences, and, if we will only abandon the effort for a precise chronological system, teach us what makes its vital order and its successive plans. Clearly, this sequence of beginning, middle, and end, is of profound interest and value. And it is with reference to this order that the effort to connect the Gospels should be made. The preacher who will treat the life of Jesus in such reference to his plan for salvation, or the reader of the Bible who will read with the same reference, will be saved from regarding the Gospels as a mere string of anecdotes. They will gain what is worth so much more, the history of system,—of the system which the Lord of Life chose to adopt in communicating its new life to the world.

To gain a distinct notion of this system, let the reader, after he has followed the life of Jesus as far as the end of the temptation, read John's Gospel as far as the twenty-first verse of the tenth chapter. Then let him read Matthew's Gospel, with or without the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. When he comes to the close, he knows that all the four are nearly parallel with each other.

Such a reader will find as he reads, if he looks for them, constant traces of cause and effect, motive and action, precedent and consequence, work and its result. He will find gradual change of opinion in hearers, gradual growth of faith in companions, development in the later discourses of what has been uttered in the earlier, and distinct, steady advance toward an aim in the Master's work. For all practical purposes we conceive this order of reading to be a sufficient rearrangement of the gospel order. The only violent transfer which it requires is the postponing to the close of the Galilean ministry of the sixth chapter of John.

We do not propose to argue now the question of this transfer. It is one of the vexed questions warmly controverted by the harmonists. We need here only call attention to John's own indications of date, which of themselves suggest that the order his Gospel now follows is not chronological, because it requires an impossible geography.

These indications are the following:—

Chap. IV. "This is again the second miracle *that* Jesus did when he was come out of Judea into Galilee."

Chap. V. "After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (Then follows the account of the lame man of Bethesda, ending with the Jews' effort to stone Jesus, and proceeding thus:)

Chap. VI. "After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the* Sea of Tiberias." (The miracle of the loaves follows. Jesus recrosses the sea to Capernaum, and the narrative proceeds:) "These things said he . . . in Capernaum." (His last words at Capernaum are given, and then follows:)

Chap. VII. "After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."

With reference to the collocation of these indications we should certainly feel no doubt if we met them in a narrative where we took an interest in the geography. A parallel case would be an abridgment of Dr. Kane's life, where we had the following chapters, corresponding to those in John, and used the same words to indicate time.

Chap. V. Dr. Kane went to New York, where he met many of his friends. He put to press here some of his observations in Natural History, and was urged to return to the North.

Chap. VI. After these things, leaving his crew frozen up in the "Advance," he crossed Baffin's Bay in a whale-boat, hoping to join Sir Edward Belcher, but, failing in this, returned to his ship.

Chap. VII. After these things, complying with the urgency of his friends, he left New York in the "Advance" for exploration in the northern parts of Baffin's Bay.

In such a narrative we should not hesitate to say that Chapter VI. was out of place.—*Edward Everett Hale, "The Logical Order of the Gospel Narratives."*

CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

COLUMBUS.

1. What reasons were there for believing in the existence of unknown continents at the time of Columbus?

2. How much was known of Asia and Africa?

3. Can you give an idea of what then was represented on a map of the world?

4. When and where was Christopher Columbus born?

5. What is known of his education and early life?

6. What was his profession?

7. Can you give any account of his wife and her father?

8. What does tradition say of old maps and papers of this man's?

9. Did Columbus know anything of the world's true form?

10. What did Columbus really propose in his voyage of discovery?

11. To what powers did he first apply for aid to carry out his projects?

12. When did he first make application to Ferdinand, King of Spain?

13. Can you give the name of the convent where he took refuge with his son? Who was then the prior?

14. Did he ever apply to England to aid him?

15. How was Queen Isabella induced to aid him?

16. What was the date of his departure on the voyage of discovery?

17. From what port did he sail?

18. What was the last land of the Eastern Hemisphere he touched at?

[Please send answers to Miss S. Minns, 14 Louisburg Square, by December 1, if possible. If not able to answer all the questions, send as many as you can.]

A statement of the sources from which the information about the Bible in previous numbers was drawn was accidentally omitted. The authorities were Smith's Bible Dictionary, E. C. Mitchell's Critical Hand-book, some articles on the Bible by James Freeman Clarke, and "Textual Criticism applied to the New Testament," by C. E. Hammond.

HOW THE NEW WORLD WAS DISCOVERED.

FROM THE SPANISH OF THE "COMMENTARIOS
REALES DE LOS INCAS," BY GARCILASO
DE LA VEGA, 1609.

About the year 1484, more or less, a pilot, native of the town of Huelva in the county of Niebla, called Alonzo Sanchez de Huelva, owned a small ship with which he carried on a traffic by sea, taking merchandise from Spain to the Canary islands, where it sold well. From the Canaries he carried a cargo of the fruit of these Islands to Madeira, thence returning to Spain laden with sugar and conserves. Crossing on this three-sided commerce from the Canaries to the Island of Madeira, a storm struck the vessel, so violent and tempestuous that, unable to encounter it, he yielded to the hurricane, and ran before the wind for twenty-eight or twenty-nine days, without knowing what way or where to. For in all that time he was unable to take the altitude either of the sun or the north. They suffered great hardship in the ship during the storm, as they could neither eat nor sleep. At the end of this long time the wind subsided, and they found themselves near an island. It is not known for certain what it was, but, from what is conjectured, it may be what is now called Santo Domingo; and it is worthy of note that the wind which, with so great violence and storm drove the ship before it, could be no other than the Solano, or east wind. For the island Santo Domingo is to the west of the Canaries; such a wind on this voyage would rather calm storms than excite them. However, the all-powerful Master, when he wishes to show mercy, draws from contrary causes the most mysterious and necessary results. So he drew water from the rock and, anointing with clay the eyes, gave sight to the blind. For, manifestly, these are shown to be works of mercy and divine goodness, and his compassion made use of this as well, in order to carry his Evangel and light of truth to all the New World, which needed it so much; since it lived, or, to speak better, died in the shadows of barbarism and idolatry, most barbarous and bestial, as in the course of this history will be seen.

The pilot leaped on shore, took the altitude of the sun, and wrote down notes of all

he saw. Also what happened at sea, both going and coming; and, having taken on board water and fuel, he departed like one groping in the dark, without knowing the way to return any more than the way he had come, so that more time elapsed than he allowed for, and, from the lengthening of the voyage, water and provisions failed. For these reasons and from the hardships suffered going and coming, they began to sicken and die, so that of the seventeen men who left Spain only five reached Terceira, among them the pilot, Alonso Sanchez de Huelva.

They went to stay at the house of the famous Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, because they knew he was a great pilot and cosmograph, who made maps for sea navigation. He received them with much affection and gave them every comfort, so that he might learn the adventures of the strange and long shipwreck which they said they had suffered. And as they were broken down by their past troubles, however much Columbus did for them, they could not rally, but died in his house, leaving him as a heritage nothing but the hardships which had caused their death. He, however, accepted them with so much resolution and courage that, forgetting the labors of the past, though many in number and long to endure he pledged himself from that time to obtain for Spain the vast riches of the New World.

That he succeeded is shown by the words which he took as the motto for his coat of arms:—

À Castilla y à Leon,
Nuevo Mundo dió Colon.

These words mean, "Columbus gave to Castile and Leon a New World."

Terceira is one of the Azores Islands. Marmontel mentions this tradition, but does not tell where he found it, probably in this work.

S. M.

BOOKS ON COLUMBUS.

Life of Columbus from his Letters, E. E. Hale; History of the Life and Voyages of Columbus, Washington Irving; With the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, C. P. Mackie, Chicago, 1891; Christopher Columbus, Justin Winsor, Boston, 1891; Story of Columbus, E. E. Seelye, New York, 1892.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[We shall print under this head each month questions which will be interesting to circles or clubs for the discussion of subjects important to mothers. We hope that members of such clubs, or individuals who write papers on these subjects, will send them to us for publication. Brief papers are better for our purpose, each one bringing out a different point.]

QUESTIONS FOR NOVEMBER.

1. How can a mother best train herself for her vocation?
2. Is physical health the most important thing?
3. Is it moral and intellectual strength, or moral and intellectual balance, that mothers need?
4. Do mothers put themselves in their child's place as much as they ought?
5. Is it service or training that a mother most owes her child?
6. Would it be well if every mother was a trained kindergartnerin?
7. "My mother lost the chance of establishing confidential relations with me when I was a little child," said a young woman. What did she mean?

We quote here an extract from a book called "Forty Years in Phrenology," by Nelson Sizer, which is very suggestive. He says:—

"I examined in this place the head of a little girl four years old, and found destructiveness and combativeness very largely developed. Wondering why these organs should be so very large, I referred to the heads of the father and mother and a younger child, and found that none of them had those organs in a more than medium degree. This, of course, excited my surprise; and I felt it necessary to account for the discrepancy, or ascertain the history of the case. Accordingly, I suggested to the parents that the child must have been very much annoyed and irritated by surrounding influences to induce at so early an age such extraordinary developments.

The mother, with regretful earnestness, replied: "That is true, and I will explain the reason. I have been a teacher, and 'boarded around,' and, seeing so much slackness and imbecility in parental government,

I firmly resolved, if I ever had children, I would begin with them in season, and make them go straight. Accordingly, this girl being my first child, I began early to make her toe the mark; and I used to train and whip her for every little offence or neglect. She has become very fretful, peevish, and violent in temper, so that now whipping only makes her worse. A few days ago I lost my temper and gave her a severe whipping; and the moment I got through with her she seized the fire-tongs, and with a severe blow she broke the back of her pet kitten that was sitting by the fire. When her anger had subsided, she mourned piteously for the death of her pet, and she cannot get over her loss. She is a very bad child when angry, and I do not know what I can do with her. I have, however, taken a very different course with my other one; and she is easily managed, though her natural disposition is no more amiable than that of the older one was at first. I fear I have spoiled my little girl by unnecessary strictness and severity."

We shall not learn the lesson of this most painful story if we do not remember that the qualities of destructiveness and combativeness may be developed by sharp words as well as by blows.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

OFFERS.

I have still a few copies of "Stepping Heavenward" which I will send to invalids or to some one remote from libraries. Also, "Mary Marston," "Warlock o' Glenwarlock," and "David Elginbrod," by George MacDonald; Drummond's "Greatest Thing in the World"; Sam Lawson's "Fireside Stories," by H. B. Stowe; "Tom Brown at Rugby." Address Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

I have one copy each of the following books, which I will send to any one who wishes them: "The Master of the Mine," Robert Buchanan; "The Heart of the Storm" and "The Silence of Dean Maitland," Maxwell Gray; "Letters from High Latitudes," Lord Dufferin; "Looking Backward." Address Mrs. J. B. Fiske, Mast Yard, N.H.

I will send a copy of the *Dumb Animals* (monthly) and of the *Christian Register* (weekly) to any one who desires to receive them regularly. Address Miss K. P. Loring, Pride's Crossing, Mass.

Another *Christian Register* is offered by Mrs. S. E. Guild, 80 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

"Will Denbigh, Nobleman"; "A Matter of Fact Girl," Theo. Gift; "Mrs. Herndon's Income," H. Campbell; "The Awakening of Mary Fenwick," Beatrice Whitby; "Two Daughters of one Race," and "Lora, the Major's Daughter," translated from the German of W. Heimbürg; "French Janet," S. Tytler; "A Life for a Life," author of "John Halifax"; "Christy Carew," M. Laffan; "Landolin," B. Auerbach; "Mr. Smith," L. B. Walford; "Home Again," George MacDonald; "Hero Carthew," Louisa Parr; "The Begum's Daughter," Byner; "Peculiar," "A Hero of the Great Rebellion," Epes Sargent; "A Reverend Idol"; "The Captain of the Janizaries," Ludlaw; "The Admiral's Ward" and "Forging the Fetters," Mrs. Alexander; "The Wellfields," Jessie Fothergill; "Whom God hath Joined"; "A Christmas Carol" and "Mrs. Lirriper's Legacy," "David Copperfield," "Little Dorrit," "Bleak House," "Dombey and Son" (incomplete); "Tom Brown at Oxford"; "Not like Other Girls," "A Diary," and "Nina," F. Bremer; "Sylvia's Lovers," "North and South," Mrs. Gaskell; "Henry Esmond"; "Jane Eyre"; "Angela," author of "Emilia Wyndham"; "Orange Lily," M. Cremmelin; "George Eliot's Life and Letters"; "The Duke's Children," Anthony Trollope; "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," W. Besant; "My Heart's in the Highlands"; "Harry Joscelyn," Mrs. Oliphant; "Reminiscences," Carlyle; "A Sylvan Queen"; "The Trumpet Major," T. Hardy; "A Sermon on War," Channing. Address Miss Lucy M. Solger, 245 Centre Street, Roxbury, Mass.

[In writing for these books, mention first those you prefer, then add whether you would like others in case those have been given away. Be sure to mention any that you do not want. In sending a book in answer to a printed request, it is better to write a P. O. card to the Book Club, else one person may receive several copies of the same book.

Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, now takes charge of the Book Club.]

REQUESTS.

The *Nation* is asked for by Miss Anna J. Hitchcock, 606 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Md., and by Mrs. Maria Souther, West Levant, Me.

A good *Life of Columbus*, by Mrs. E. M. Backus, 1403 East Broad Street, Richmond, Va.

(In sending this book, mention whether you give it or lend it.)

The *Household or Housekeeper's Weekly* by Mrs. John Morgan, Dunlor, Whitman Co., Wash.

"Old Town Folks," "We and our Neighbors," "My Wife and I," by Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder Co., Col.

(These three books are by Mrs. H. B. Stowe. Mrs. Stowell lends books to readers in a neighborhood where there is no library.)

I am situated in a very remote part of Cumberland Mountain, entirely out of the reach of books and libraries. I will ask you to send me a copy of "Stepping Heavenward" and "The Chaplet of Pearls." May they be mine? I would like to read them to my poor neighbors who cannot read, and lend them to others who can. Mrs. Lavinia Pearson, Pearson, Bledsoe Co., Tenn.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR LENDERS AND BORROWERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to borrow, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club, care of Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass. Mrs. Millet has kindly consented to become secretary of the Book Club.

New Subscribers.—Please send subscriptions for the paper to Miss F. L. Close, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Letters to the paper or any material for insertion may be sent for the present to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.